(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, whether Government is contemplating to take any concrete steps in this regard; and

(d) whether Government is aware that several small manufacturers print MRP 20 to 25 times more than the cost?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) to (c) As per the provisions contained in the Standards of Weights and Measures (Packaged Commodites) Rules, 1977, the manufacturer/importer of a pre-packed commodity is to ensure that the package contains, *inter-alia,* declaration of retail sale price in the form "Maximum Retail Price" (MRP), which shall be inclusive of all taxes. This is normally done by the company on the basis of calculation of cost and market factors. No guidelines have been prescribed by the Government for determining the MRP by the company.

(d) No such complaints have come to the Department.

Recommendations of Abhijit Sen Committee

1217. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Abhijit Sen Committee has recommended to reintroduce the universal PDS with uniform central issue price; and

(b) if so, the actions being taken by Government to implement the recommendation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) This recommendation was not agreed to since the Targeted PDS was introduced in June, 1997 with a view to aim at the underprivileged sections of the society, as the earlier Universal PDS did not adequately focus on the hungry and had urban bias. The introduction of universal PDS may result in the PDS losing its focus on meeting the needs of the poor.

Diversion of Foodgrains

1218. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what is the current stock of foodgrains available with Government;

(b) whether it is a fact that there has been large scale diversion of foodgrains meant for PDS, as indicated by a panel set up by his Ministry;

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard and the reasons for the deiversion of foodgrains;

(d) whether it is also a fact that the country spends over 10000 crores for PDS; and

(e) if so, whether Government has given a thought for overhauling PDS and, if so, with what result?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The stock of foodgrains (rice & wheat) as on 1.11.2007 is as under:—

(in lakh tons)

Rice	106.51
Wheat	90.25
TOTAL:	196.76

(b) and (c) The Department of Food & Public Distribution got Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) evaluated by PEO, Planning Commission and ORG MARG. The report of ORG Marg received in 2005 mentioned that there was diversion of 53% wheat and 39% rice respectively, under TPDS at the all India level.

The Programme Evaluation Organization report mentioned 36.35% diversion of subsidized foodgrains. These reports pointed out the diversion/leakages of foodgrains under TPDS is due to inclusion and exclusion errors in identifying targeted beneficiaries and non-viability of Fair Price Shops (FPS).

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Strengthening of the Targeted Public Distribution System to improve its efficiency, accountability and effectiveness is an ongoing process. Based on findings of earlier studies of TPDS, a Nine-Point Action Plan is already under implementation by States and UT Governments. Its implementation is monitored by the Central Government. Action Plan for strengthening of TPDS is enclosed as Statement. (*See* below).

Additionally, a revised Citizens' Charter has been issued recently for adoption and implementation by State/UT Governments for facilitating use by citizens of provisions of Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005 in relation to functioning of TPDS.

Statement

Action Plan for Strengthening of TPDS

(i) Continuous review of the BPL and AAY lists to eliminate bogus ration cards and to ensure coverage of only eligible BPL and Antyodaya families.

(ii) Ensuring leakages-free and diversion-free distribution of PDS commodities, regular inspection by different levels of functionaries, strict action against guilty persons/ agencies.

(iii) Involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions in PDS operations—PRI representatives on Advisory Committees, running of fair price shops by Panchayats and effective representation of Panchayati Raj representatives on Vigilance Committees.

(iv) Ensuring transparency in working of PDS, display of BPL and AAY lists by fair price shops, observance of notified timings by fair price shops.

(v) Use of Information Technology, Computerization of TPDS operations, display of fair price shops-wise and district wise allocations of PDS commodities on web-sites for public scrutiny.

(vi) Carryout door-step delivery of PDS commodities to fair price shops.

(vii) Ensuring timely availability of and issuance of foodgrains by fair price shops.

(viii) Creating awareness among public about PDS operations, training Vigilance Committees of intricacies of PDS operations.

(ix) Making fair price shops financially viable entities—allowing them to sell non PDS items etc.

Export of sugar

1219. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Governmnet is planning to permit export of sugar once again;

(b) whether this would lead to increase in the prices of sugar for the common man of the country;

(c) the details of sugar realization per acre of sugarcane; and

(d) the quantum of sugar production and consumption during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The ban on export of sugar has already been lifted by the Government from January, 2007.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Sugar Realization from sugarcane depends upon various parameters including yield of sugarcane per acre, quantity and quality of cane crushed, the process followed by the sugar factories, which varies from State to State.

(d) The quantum of sugar production and consumption during the sugar seasons (October-September) of last three years were as under:—

(Quantity in lac tons)

Season	Production	Consumption
2004-05	130.0	171.44
2005-06	193.21	183.21
2006-07	280.00	190.00

Amendment of Weight and Measurement Act

†1220. SHRI BANWARI LAL KANCHHAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would consider to amend the old Weight and Measurement Act and provide for renewal of licence in three years instead of present provision of one year; and

(b) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Validity of licence issued to manufacturer dealer or repairer of weights and measures is presently regulated by State Governments under their respective Weights and Measures (Enforcement) Rules. Central Government has circulated model Rules to State Governments which provide *inter alia* that a licence shall be valid for one calendar year but may be renewed for a period of five years on payment of prescribed fee.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.